Feature

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry Morrison

Photo by Senior Airman Lanie McNeal

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Above left: Senior Airman Charles Anthony, 8th Supply Squadron fuels laboratory technician, checks the temperature zone from a JP-8 storage tank located here. Left: Airman 1st Class Dallas Hutchinson (left), 8th SUPS fuels distribution technician, holds the pipe that Senior Airman Toby Harbuck, 80th Fighter Squadron, attaches to the F-16 allowing thousands of gallons of fuel to be supplied to the plane awaiting his second run over South Korean skies. Above Right: Senior Airman Lee Westfall, 8th SUPS fuels laboratory technician, checks the fuel systems icing inhibitor from a JP-8 storage tank.

Wolf Pack fuels: *Full service and you don't have to pay at the pump*

By Staff Sgt. Heather Shelton
8th Fighter Wing Public Affairs

"Who the hell? POL!"

Many Wolf Pack members have heard the saying, but what exactly do they do?

"Our mission here at the Wolf Pack is to provide aviation and ground fuel and cryogenics products to the 8th Fighter Wing enabling them to 'Take the Fight North'," said Senior Master Sgt. Williams, 8th Supply Squadron fuels manager. "We also provide fuel and cryogenic support to transient aircraft, units deployed to Kunsan, and the Republic of Korea Air Force."

While pumping gas may seem like an easy job, it's a little more complicated than just hooking up a hose and watching numbers spin around.

"Contrary to what most people think, we (members of the petroleum, oils and lubricants career field) do more than just pump gas," said Williams. "A lot has to be done before we ever arrive at the aircraft."

A lot indeed, according to Williams an average duty day starts with a daily shift safety briefing followed by an inspection of all of the facilities and 23 vehicles currently operating in the fleet. After inspections have been completed, laboratory samples have to be taken and analyzed on facilities and equipment.

"Once we receive fuel requests from the maintenance operation control center our goal is to be at the jet within eight minutes from the time the fuel is requested," said Williams. "Here at Kunsan, our day-to-day average is approximately five minutes, however, during contingency operations and exercises our usual response times are approximately two minutes."

While the average person couldn't imagine ever using 1.4 million gallons of fuel in a lifetime, here at Kunsan, POL pumps that much in a month.

"It takes less than 10 minutes to service an aircraft from arrival to departure," said Williams. "Our refueling trucks hold 6,000 gallons each and are capable of pumping at rates up to 600 gallons per minute."

According to Williams, the job here at the Wolf Pack is very different from stateside bases primarily because of a "real mission." The storage capacity for fuel dwarfs that of the average stateside base and POL here produces liquid oxygen and nitrogen, where as in the states it's procured locally.

"The biggest difference is the high turnover rate coupled with the night-flying mission," added Williams. "POL was one of the first flights, if not the first, to implement duty hours to support night-flying missions."

Like other organizations at Kunsan, one challenge for the fuels team is overcoming morale issues.

"We try to make everyone here feel at home and that they are all a part of one big family," said Williams. "More importantly, everyone here knows they are expected to give 110 percent day-in and day-out and know that we couldn't do what we do at the tip of the spear without them."

In an effort to show off their skills, the Kunsan fuels team gets a chance to participate in a competition each year against Osan.

"Each base competes in events to hone readiness skills such as driving/positioning refueling vehicles in MOPP 4, laboratory analysis and changing refueling tires in less than one minute," said Williams. "This year Wolf Pack POL won first place and brought home the overall first place trophy."

In an attempt to prove that Wolf Pack POL is not only the best on the peninsula, they are preparing to compete for the Ray Gross Award for the Best Fuel Flight in Pacific Air Forces Command and the American Petroleum Institute Award for the best in the Air Force.

"This competition requires a lot of motivation, great attitude and facility self-help projects," said Williams. "Regardless if we win or lose, our facilities will be in better shape than we found them. We're looking out for the future classes of the Wolf Pack."